

February 3, 2012

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Via email

Dear Chris and Martha,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the December 2011 draft Action Agenda. The City of Seattle strongly supports the mission of the Puget Sound Partnership; we recognize the critical need for collective, focused action to protect and restore Puget Sound. As with past comments we've provided to the Partnership, the comments below are the opinions of professional and technical staff of the City of Seattle (Seattle Public Utilities, Seattle City Light and the Department of Planning and Development), rather than a statement of official City policy. I would also note that these comments do not constitute a comprehensive review of the draft document. They are a mix of overarching comments and specific observations on some elements relevant to the work of our staff that were able to provide feedback. We hope these, as well as the comments of the South Central Action Area Caucus (where we participate) will be helpful as the final document is completed.

Clarity. We appreciate the many hours of hard work by Partnership staff, their dedication to the task of saving Puget Sound and the comprehensive consultation with experts and interested parties that went into the adoption of targets and the creation of the draft Action Agenda. The draft reflects the challenges inherent in undertaking a task of this magnitude. However, at this stage, we have concerns about the ability of this document to provide a clear path forward. The draft Action Agenda is too lengthy, complex and process-oriented. We believe the Action Agenda should be simplified, shortened and focused, providing a prioritized plan, with a list of actions that need to be completed first to protect and restore the most sensitive and threatened ecosystems. The list should identify exactly what it will take to move forward on these key actions; for example, where new funding, legislative action, political will and community support is needed, where enforcement of existing law must be improved, where ongoing work needs to be recognized and supported, and who will truly be a "lead agency" for any particular new action, as well as who will be partners in that action.

Prioritization. While perhaps easier said than done, it would have been helpful if the prioritization process of the Near Term Actions (NTA) would have happened earlier and incorporated into the draft Action Agenda. This would have given us and other interested parties the opportunity to react the actions the Partnership expects to undertake in the near future. While the lists of near-term actions include numerous worthwhile proposals, projects and programs, it is difficult to tell which are happening, which will be acted on (and by whom), which are funded or lacking funding and which actions we simply hope to be able to undertake sometime in the future. We know, for example, that

many of the NTA are not new, but rather have not occurred or are occurring slowly due to ongoing lack of resources. The NTA should also be consistent. If the decision is not to integrate local priorities, then the list should only reflect those that are Sound-wide or comprehensive.

An important if tangential point; our staff commented time and again that they feel strongly that updating the Action Agenda every two years makes no scientific or practical sense. This two year timeline necessitates that the limited Partnership staff continually focus on updates, when the critical mission needs to be assuring implementation of priority actions. Water system plans, for example, are required to be updated every six years, a much more rational amount of time. We suggest that the Partnership statute be amended to allow for time to focus on action rather than on updating.

Funding. One of the weaker sections of the document, yet one of the most important, is the draft funding strategy. The document does not lay out a clear, comprehensive strategy. We are pleased by the formation of the ECB funding committee and appreciate the Partnership's support of the local efforts of WRIA 9 and others. However, the Partnership needs to develop a comprehensive and integrated federal, state, and local funding strategy that links to priority actions and creates a balance of financial responsibility. Good work has been done, both by Partnership consultants early on in the life of the Partnership, and by WRIA 9. This earlier work should be utilized, added to and refined in order to create a meaningful funding strategy. The strategy should identify the costs for Action Agenda implementation, identify funding gaps and develop proposals to fill the gaps. It should also recognize existing investments at all levels of government, as well as by the private and non-profit sectors.

Legislative. Similarly, the section on needed legislative actions is incomplete; it leaves the impression that limited legislative action is needed, when in fact actions have not been comprehensively identified. As priority NTAs are identified, legislative strategies should be built around (and acted on) these where necessary.

Local Integrating Organizations/Local Actions. The efforts of the LIOs are a work in progress. In order to make the efforts of the LIOs meaningful and to facilitate a true partnership, there should be integration of local priorities along with clear strategies and priorities for implementation. At the very least, it should be clearer how the Partnership intends to support local priorities and the ongoing work of the LIOs.

As we are also aware, the Local Integrating Organizations (LIOs) are in different stages of development. While the City of Seattle is located in and so is engaged in the work of the South Central Action Area, Seattle City Light focuses heavily on the Skagit, where we are active partners in ecosystem recovery efforts but where the role of the LIOs remains unclear. To that end, the Action Agenda needs to clearly identify what Local Integrating Organizations (LIOs) are, and how they will complement the work being done by watershed lead organizations, tribes, federal, state, and local governments, and NGO's that are already in place throughout the Puget Sound. The definition of a "local area" should be provided in. Is a "local area" a watershed, a sub-basin, or a major region within the Puget Sound? Why are the "local area" designations provided on Page 21 inconsistent with the geography of the PSP Action Areas e.g., Skagit is part of Whidbey Basin Action Area. (See also specific comments on the Skagit, below).

Many of the actions described in the Action Agenda are already being implemented by local, state, and federal government agencies, tribes, watershed organizations, and conservation groups. However, the list of ongoing actions focuses mainly on efforts by state agencies. The Action Agenda needs to better identify ongoing ecosystem protection and restoration actions that are occurring in the Puget Sound, and to give credit to those who are doing it. PSP developed a comprehensive database of ongoing actions several years ago that does not appear to be utilized.

Climate Change. The lack of comprehensive inclusion of climate change in the draft Action Agenda makes it difficult to fully assess the issue as it relates to the efforts of the Partnership. We're pleased the Partnership is working with the UW Climate Impacts Group. "...to set the Puget Sound region and the Action Agenda on a path for adapting our work in the face of a changing climate". However, the wording seems to be a little off, in that PSP and UWCIG is not setting the Puget Sound region on an adaptive path, but rather the Action Agenda. Setting the region on an adaptive path implies some sort of multi-stakeholder process involving impacted and interested entities (including Seattle Public Utilities) and we're not aware of that happening.

On page 16, it notes some projected changes in snowpack which do not translate into one to one changes instream flow. It would be helpful to clarify this so that readers aren't left doing their own extrapolation.

At the bottom of page 17, it says "...initial analysis of the Climate Impacts Group and the state response strategy will inform this work." Something along the lines of "as well as climate assessments conducted and/or adaptation strategies developed by other governmental agencies, including local government, in the Puget Sound region." sound be added. If this is indeed a partnership, it is important to build off of work that has already been done on this issue by others, including SPU. Years of climate work by other entities should be recognized and not ignored. This imperative isn't limited to this final sentence but should inform the overall climate approach. CIG and the State should not be your only sources. Also on this page, there is a reference made to "strategy conveners". Are these individuals or agencies? This should be clarified.

The statement that climate change scenarios for the Puget Sound are "projections, not predictions" is incorrect. The climate change scenarios are based upon a number of Global Climate Models (GCMs), each of which is based upon different greenhouse gas accumulation rates and climate assumptions. Predictions of air temperature and hydrological conditions in the future are produced under each scenario using climate downscaling, hydrological modeling, statistical downscaling, and other techniques.

Protect and Restore Terrestrial and Freshwater Ecosystems (A)

Ecosystem Restoration. The Action Agenda seeks to restore the health of Puget Sound ecosystem. However, there are only limited references to ecology, and ecosystem principles, in the document. The ecosystem recovery targets are almost all single species, and there is little or no reference to ecological communities. The concept of biodiversity, which is key to ecosystem restoration and recovery, is not really brought up anywhere in the document. The majority of large scale ecosystem recovery efforts

that have been developed in the United States, including the San Francisco Bay, Chesapeake Bay, Everglades, Great Lakes, and Gulf Coast focus on improving biodiversity.

The present status of ecosystem “attributes” and “components” needs to be clearly described and quantified. It is hard to determine where we should be going in terms of ecosystem recovery if we don’t know where we are right now. A status and trends section on key ecological attributes, such as old-growth forested area, impervious area, percentage of shoreline that has been hardened, should be provided to identify how much biodiversity and habitat has been lost in the Puget Sound, and the rate to which these are being lost under current conditions.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) is the lead federal agency for protecting and restoring biodiversity in the Puget Sound, and has jurisdiction under the Endangered Species Act for all federally listed species except for salmon, steelhead, and marine mammals. They are also the lead agency for responsible for development and implementation of Habitat Conservation Plans (HCPs) in this region. However, there is no mention of the USFWS in Section A10 (Protect and Restore the Native Diversity and Abundance of Puget Species). In fact, the Endangered Species Act is not specially mentioned in the native diversity and abundance section of the Action Agenda. The USFWS is responsible for many of the biodiversity and native species conservation programs that have been implemented in the Puget Sound, and has provided millions of dollars in grant funding to protect and restore of species biodiversity in our region. They have also been a major source of grant funding for estuary restoration projects in the Puget Sound. Further, the USFWS has also been implementing and funding research on the impacts of climate change on biodiversity in the Puget Sound. The draft Action Agenda identifies parties to implement many of the Near Term Action. This assignment of responsibility should be based on proper assumptions regarding funding and staffing. Otherwise, there is a risk that expectations will be raised that do not also reflect the priorities of the entities that control the funding sources needed to accomplish the work.

Upper Watersheds. Attention to the floodplain areas is certainly very important and appreciated, particularly by our staff who work in lower watersheds. However, the Action Agenda generally ignores the upper areas of Puget Sound watersheds. Non-floodplain areas, including headwater streams and rivers, are vital to steelhead, bull trout, and spring Chinook salmon (the most threatened Chinook run-type in the Puget Sound). Headwater streams and rivers contribute the largest overall area to a Puget Sound watershed, and provide some of the most important ecosystem services, including water production, nutrient cycling, organic matter production (carbon cycling), large wood production, and sediment retention. Protecting and restoring these areas is critical to sustaining the health of all Puget Sound Ecosystems. Maintaining healthy headwater forest, stream, and wetland ecosystems will be vital to moderating and adapting to the impacts of climate change in the future.

The majority of upland and terrestrial areas in several Puget Sound watersheds, including the Skagit, are in federal ownership. However, the only ongoing programs identified in the Action Agenda are those administered by state agencies and tribes. The Action Agenda should be expanded to include better integration with ongoing actions by federal land management agencies.

Instream Flows. One of the Freshwater Protection targets is the “maintenance of stable and increasing flows” in highly regulated rivers including the Skagit, Cedar, and Green rivers. Due to the presence of large reservoirs on these systems, flows are already much more stable compared to unregulated systems. Moreover, instream flow regulations and agreements on these rivers result in minimum flows that typically exceed natural baseflow conditions. The list of target rivers on Page 90 does not correspond to the list of rivers shown in the graph on Page 91.

Salmon/Listed Fish Recovery. One of the major challenges to protecting and recovering salmon identified in the Action Agenda is under-investment in capital projects. The document should stress that one of the greatest challenge at this time is funding, developing the engineering and administrative capacity, and gaining political support for large public works projects that are needed to remove or modify existing infrastructure including dikes, levees, jetties, sea walls, riprap, and roads that exist along the shorelines, estuaries, deltas, and major rivers of the Puget Sound. The projects can cost millions of dollars each, but are essential to restoring the habitat and ecological processes required to achieve salmon recovery. Most salmon restoration efforts to date have focused on relatively small projects that are spread over the Puget Sound landscape, as identified in Salmon Plans. Large estuary projects completed in the Nisqually and Skagit deltas in recent years provide examples of the types of large projects needed for salmon recovery in the future.

The Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Plan was developed to guide the recovery of three ESA-listed fish species: Chinook salmon, Hood Canal chum salmon, and bull trout. The PSP continues to work closely with NOAA Fisheries for implementing the recovery of Chinook and chum salmon. However, working with the USFWS to guide the recovery of one of the three ESA-listed fish species in the Puget Sound is barely mentioned. Indeed, the USFWS is only mentioned under the “other federal” agency” agency in Action Agenda. The PSP should add the following near-term action: “The USFWS will finalize the Bull Trout Recovery Plan for the Puget Sound Distinct Population Segment (DPS) in 2012. The PSP will work with the USFWS and the Puget Sound Bull Trout Recovery Unit Team (RUT) to implement the recovery actions identified in this plan.”

Land Acquisition and Easements. The terms “protect” and “protection” are employed throughout the Action Agenda, but it is difficult to determine when these terms are being applied to legal regulations, and when they are being applied to conservation land acquisitions and easements. Protecting lands through conservation land acquisitions and easements is critical to salmon recovery in the Puget Sound given the large habitat losses that have occurred due to historic development, and due to the increasing pressure on remaining habitats resulting from an expanding human population in the region. It is important to make this distinction because land acquisitions and easements provide a high level of certainty in protecting the best remaining habitats, which is important to consider when land-use regulation and political administration changes occur much more rapidly the 50-year plus time frame needed to restore ecological processes and recover sensitive species populations.

Comments on Selected Strategies

Indicators and Recovery Targets

Swimming Beaches (pg 6)

Comment: Enterococcus may not be the most appropriate indicator bacteria for swimming beach health. It is used because it best mimics survivability of bacteria that has passed through PTOW, not because it is the best indicator of human health risk. This would miss non-point contributions.

Wild Chinook (pg 7)

Comment: This should reference the Chinook recovery plan targets.

Shoreline Armoring (pg 8)

Comment: There should be an immediate ban on creosote piles and an incentive program for replacement of existing piles with non-toxic alternatives. This should be decoupled from the program to reduce armoring in order to reduce this toxic load as quickly as possible.

Freshwater Quality (pg 9)

Comment: There is a concern that these targets are being met by a reduction in ambient monitoring, rather than by an improvement in water quality

Potential Legislative Action

Comment: The Partnership should look at these and other funding mechanisms/allocation formulas for opportunities to support and encourage density as one of the few effective ways to address increasing population growth and maintain open space and functionality.

A1 Focus Land Development Away from Ecologically Important and Sensitive Areas

General Comment: Again, the Partnership should look for ways we incentivize density as way to address pollution reduction and open space protection

A1.1 Identify and prioritize areas that should be protected or restored and those that are best suitable for (low impact) development

Comment: This section needs to specifically address the implementation of the Chinook recovery plans that were developed for all of the PS WRIAs.

From the description, it sounds like the tool for identifying and prioritizing is the state watershed characterization. However, the Action Agenda should recognize local characterizations, particularly since we've learned that the state characterization resolution is not fine enough to capture more urban watersheds. Seattle has detailed watershed analyses for its 5 major urban creeks, plus the shoreline characterization, and GIS analyses; priority projects are selected and decisions made about acquisition,

restoration and low impact development (green stormwater infrastructure) using this information. Key projects that are important for salmon are on the 3 and 10 year lists for the salmon recovery plans.

A1.3 Improve local governments' ability and willingness to implement, monitor and enforce plans, regulations and permits that are consistent with protection and recovery targets for Puget Sound

Comment: Lack of funding is a major obstacle even in larger jurisdictions whose planning departments depend upon fees and general funds for their budgets, which have been significantly cut the last few years.

A1.4 Strengthen and streamline existing local, state, federal permitting programs

Comment: Needs to be done in a way that still allows for effective review of restoration and development projects that is protective of ecologically sensitive areas.

A4 Encourage compact regional growth patterns and create dense, attractive and mixed-use and transit oriented communities

A4.2 Provide the necessary infrastructure and incentives within urban growth areas to accommodate new and re-development

Comment: We strongly support increased densities in urban areas. The Action Agenda should also recognize and support the need to protect ecologically sensitive areas as designated in critical area ordinances and shoreline management programs.

A4.3 Enhance and expand the benefits of living in compact communities to increase consumer demand for them

Comment: see above A4.2 comment, plus benefits include access to nearby open space, natural areas and parks.

A5 Protect and Restore Floodplain Function

Comment: Priority, particularly for staff in our municipal watersheds and those implementing our HCP.

A.5 Floodplain Restoration

General comment: Seattle is so developed, not all of the goals/metrics seem applicable or reasonable in a highly developed, urban area. Regarding loss of floodplain function - redevelopment in our floodplains is strictly regulated so we assume no further harm but not necessarily significant improvement.

Page 64 at the bottom - it's already 2012 so "by 2012" doesn't work. These will need to be modified to a later (or more specific) date.

A5.1 NTA1: Floodplain Policy Team

Comment: If this is beyond what is already in the WRIA salmon recovery plans and that process, Seattle already has decision-making frameworks and prioritization efforts for all projects, not just floodplain. A new prioritization method introduced from PSP would have to be coordinated with what is already being used.

A5.1. NTA2: PSP will gather data on public perception of flood risks, floodplain function

Comment: If this has not already been done, any surveys of Seattle residents regarding flood risks should be performed in close coordination with Seattle Public Utilities (SPU). We have outreach efforts underway and concerns in particular communities and so we would need to work together to assure the PSP effort would be productive.

A5.3. Implement and maintain priority floodplain restoration projects.

Comment: The title is misleading, given the near-term actions. Is this about floodplain projects, or projects to repair or replace infrastructure? This makes a big difference and if the latter you need to bring in transportation departments regarding roads and bridges. They determine that list of projects. For example, SPU owns and maintains most of the stream culverts but even then all repairs/replacements include coordination with SDOT.

How do you define “if cannot be relocated should be the least disruptive?”. Also, it’s very unlikely that the new or replacement infrastructure will be moved. Unless there is public open space, that would require condemnation and removal of structures/roads.

A5.4 Protect and maintain intact and functional floodplains.

Comment: Interesting reliance on FEMA to protect and maintain intact and functional floodplains. It appears that building is still allowed in the floodplain in the model floodplain ordinance being proposed under the BiOp requirements of NFIP. The floodplain ordinances protect the floodway only – not the floodplain.

A6 Implement and Maintain Freshwater and Upland Restoration Projects

A6.1 Implement and maintain priority freshwater restoration projects

Comment: This is a priority for Seattle, both in and along our major urban creeks as well as in the Cedar River, along Lake Washington, and in the Skagit, Tolt and Snohomish watersheds. Very underfunded.

A6.2 Implement and maintain priority terrestrial restoration projects

Comment: Terrestrial restoration needs to be identified.

Freshwater Protection/Salmon Recovery (pg 83)

Comment: This should reference the pre-spawn mortality work conducted by NMFS, most comments are on quantity, not much on quality

A6.3 Implement restoration actions in urban and suburban areas while balancing the need for these areas to accommodate growth, density and infill development

Comment: Support as a high priority for Seattle. Very underfunded. Still, the item should reflect the significant amount of work and investment happening at the local level.

A6.4 Implement stewardship incentive programs to increase the ability of private landowners to undertake and maintain restoration projects

Comment: Providing incentives for private landowners is key to accomplish restoration along rivers and creeks along critical habitat reaches, as ownership is not contiguous. Dependent on availability of resources.

A.8.1 Instream Flows

Comment: A near-term action could be to implement the 2nd order stream monitoring portion of the S&T for the NPDES

A9 Protect and Recover Salmon

A9.1 Implement the high priority salmon recovery actions identified in other parts of the Action Agenda and the Biennial Science Work Plan

A9.2 Implement salmon recovery strategies and actions not listed elsewhere in the Action Agenda

A9.3 Maintain and enhance the community infrastructure that supports salmon recovery

Comment: We support all of the above sub-strategies, with the recognition that lack of adequate funding is the major barrier to implementation. Near-term action should be to fully implement the existing Chinook Recovery Plans

A.11 Invasive Species

Comment: All invasive species prevention protocols should be mandatory components of all JARPA permits.

A11.1 NTA 4: DFW will develop a plan with the objective of limiting the spread of New Zealand mud snails in the Puget Sound basin.

Comment: Performance measure: Change in the number of known areas or acreage infested with New Zealand or change in the number of known locations containing mudsnails. The number of sites has increased – is this an indication of success as the performance measure is currently written?

Protect and Restore Marine and Nearshore Ecosystems (B)

Comments on Selected Strategies

B1 Use anticipated population and economic growth as a catalyst for recovery by building on existing efforts to establish protection and restoration priorities

B1.1 Ensure complete, accurate and recent information directly assists shoreline planning and decision making at the site specific and regional levels

Comment: Great ideas, but who will do this and when? How will it be funded? The description should include mention of the shoreline restoration plans being developed under local SMPs.

B1.2 Monitor projects to effectively evaluate results and implement adaptive management

Comment: This is important to do for all projects, but the usual obstacle is finding the funding. Appears from description that this is only referring to those projects funded by ESRP. Is that the case, or are other projects included?

Mitigation projects should be included in monitoring to determine if the mitigation that is required is achieving the required compensation for the impact caused by a project. Dedicated funding is needed for this because the cost to do business, mitigate for impacts and monitor will be a very big issue if funding for monitoring does not come from another source.

B1.3 Use outreach and education to encourage actions to protect and restore nearshore and marine habitats

Comment: Again, who is expected to do this, when and how funded? Just the list under ongoing programs?

B2 Shoreline Armoring

B2.1 Take actions that protect priority nearshore physical and ecological processes consistent with the Soundwide restoration priorities in B1.1

Comment: Good to include reference to salmon recovery plans in this section, as they also identify priorities for protection and restoration based on science for each WRIA. This includes the more urban systems where it is still important to ensure shoreline habitat for salmon.

Also shoreline restoration plans identify areas that need protection/restoration. For both these types of plans, finding the funding is a barrier.

B2.2 Prevent new shoreline armoring except where it is required to protect existing infrastructure from imminent risk

Comment: In the description, reference is made to a variety of ways to make this happen, including using soft shore methods. Recommend adding to strategy: "Use soft shore techniques where feasible".

Ecology's Shoreline Master Program Guidelines include many standards for new shoreline armoring and bulkhead armoring. These guidelines should be reviewed to determine how close they are to the recommendations. If recommendations are different then an additional action item (or strategy) to change the guidelines should be made to the state legislature to ensure that the recommendations are followed.

B2.3 Where armoring is aging or non-protective, seek opportunities for permanent removal or the use of soft armoring replacement or landward setback techniques.

Comment: Strongly support. This is consistent with the WRIA 8 and Seattle's approach regarding green s Remove creosote pilings w/ low cost support. Overwater structures also have the potential to introduce contaminants into sensitive areas because older creosote- or copper-treated wood pilings or decks are known to lead toxics such as polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons and copper arsenate compounds.

B2.6 Give permitting agencies and local governments the tools and resources they need to ensure protection of nearshore and marine environments

Comment: If resources means more funding, then yes. Even larger jurisdictions are understaffed in this area.

B3. Implement and maintain priority nearshore and marine ecosystem restoration projects

B3.1 Use a variety of mechanisms to advance priority restoration projects

Comment: Priorities for estuarine and nearshore restoration along Seattle's shorelines are identified in the Salmon Recovery plans for WRIAs 8 and 9, as well as in the draft Shoreline Restoration Plan. The description under this strategy is silent regarding types of mechanisms. A major need for implementing priority projects from Seattle's is funding.

See previous comment regarding Ecology's Shoreline Master Program Guidelines. The SMP guidelines have standards for replacement of existing shoreline armoring. This section should be reviewed and amended (if needed to meet PSP recommendations) by the state legislature to ensure the recommendations are followed.

B3.2 Provide incentives to encourage removal of armoring and **B3.2 NTA 2:** Recognition program to highlight retrofits, redevelopments, bulkhead removals, and soft shoreline projects

Comment: Regarding the performance measures: Program in place or not; number of awards
This should be modified to include the toxics issue associated with creosote pilings

Reduce and Control the Sources of Pollution to Puget Sound (C)

Overall, there is a lot here. Like other parts of the draft Action Agenda, this represents a lot of good thinking and hard work but also a bit of the kitchen sink approach (somewhat emphasized by the # pages in the document). Again, a challenge is that it is hard to differentiate between what is actually

occurring (somewhat done by “Ongoing Programs”) from what might likely happen vs. wish list. This question was particularly raised when reviewing a lot of exciting and interesting items from C1 regarding product management.

C1/ C1.1 Toxics Reduction

Comment: Was intrigued and supportive of all the (potential?) Product Management work identified. Discouraging that there were no NTAs for air deposition (#1.3) but at least it made the list. We think there should be an action directing follow-up work to Ecology’s toxic loading studies through the development and implementation of a work plan for reducing/appropriately replacing priority toxic chemicals.

C1.5 Increase Compliance with and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and permits.

Comment: We support this item, but it should apply across the board in all areas, not just as applied to pollution action items.

C2.2 Stormwater NPDES Permits

Comment: While there is general support for this concept, it makes some of our professional science staff nervous as its unclear the basis for which pollutants would be selected at which levels. The science isn’t there that directly links discharge levels to 2020 recovery targets. Sounds good and maybe additional detail about what is being proposed would help. But overall I’m not sure standards for who and for what and how it would be determined would be done. It sounds like this is for new/redevelopment and Ecology is already pursuing LID standards for this – is this in addition? Just not sure this is well thought out.

C2.2 NTA 3: Shellfish Growing Areas; Performance measures: Assistance provided to non-permitted local governments by September 2012; documentation of reduced impacts

Comment: Should expand measure to include implementation and coordination with the RSWP NPDES nearshore protocols that are focused on shellfish

C2.3 NTA1 Fix problems caused by existing development

Comment: Once again, seems like a pretty ambitious project. Is PSRC is the appropriate entity to do this work? A list of top projects almost certainly won’t be available by Dec 2012. The KC/EPA work referred to is rough at best and geared really only toward flow. It’s not a strong basis of developing a prioritized list. Also, who will fund this effort?

C2.5 NTA 1 Stormwater-related education and training

Comment: Highly supportive of Washington Stormwater Center.

C2.6 Assess effectiveness of actions and effects on the environment

Comment: Support full implementation

C2.6 Science Needs

The following is a preliminary list of science needs that have been identified:

- Will there be any effects on groundwater (i.e., hydrology or quality) from increased infiltration of stormwater?

Comment: Yes, directly related to use of GSI

- Do we need better treatment than basic (80 percent TSS removal) for discharges to Puget Sound?

Comment: Absolutely yes, dissolved metals and petroleum hydrocarbons primarily in urban and transportation areas

Insects in Small Streams (pg 193) The 2020 recovery target related to urban runoff is for 100 percent of Puget Sound lowland stream drainage areas monitored with baseline B-IBI scores of 42-46 or better to retain these “excellent” scores and mean B-IBI scores of 30 Puget Sound lowland drainage areas improve from “fair” to “good.” ...

Comment: Conceptually, the goal is good, but poorly written. The target can be met by eliminating monitoring in streams with low B-IBI scores. This is already occurring in some local jurisdictions, where ambient monitoring is being eliminated in order to increase the % of monitored streams that meet the criteria. Do not target or evaluate on the % of monitored streams.

Three 2020 recovery targets for **Fresh Water Quality** (pg 199):

Comment: These are subject to the same risk of manipulation of effort as the insects in small streams; as currently written, the target could be met without fixing the problem- if we were to stop monitoring all streams that <80, we would meet the ‘recovery target’. Should be re-written to state that those streams that are currently <80, half of those will be >80.

Funding (F)

FS1.1 Maintain and enhance federal funding for implementation of Action Agenda priorities

Comment: Federal funding also supports local implementers (for ex. City of Seattle has several EPA grants). It would be good not to rule this possibility out in the future. Add Army Corps of Engineers to the list of federal agencies in the first bullet – they are a key source of habitat funding.

FS1.3 Maintain, enhance, and focus state funding for implementation of Action Agenda priorities

Comment: Agree. In particular, critical to restore and enhance the stormwater capacity funds as well as the MTCA funding for Remedial Action Grants (toxic site clean-up, such as the Duwamish). If grant criteria and project selection processes are to be aligned with Action Agenda priorities, then priorities need to first include the mandates under existing regulatory requirements.

FS1.4 Maintain and enhance local funding for implementation of Action Agenda priorities

Comment: WRIA 9 (with the support of others) has done a good job looking into this issue. From the Partnership perspective, this needs to be done in the context of an integrated strategy – federal, state and local funding. Local governments cannot bear all the burden of meeting their existing regulatory requirements, much less new priorities.

FS1.5 Develop opportunities for private sector funding for implementation of Action Agenda priorities

Comment: Intriguing idea, but who will take this on? Might be good to pilot with one priority first.

Stormwater-related issue in the South Central Action Area Caucus

- p. 365. Item D doesn't make sense as written. Suggested rewrite "Fund stormwater retrofits and operations/maintenance of existing stormwater infrastructure." This should also be broadened to match table for fund SWMPs – it's not all about the structural.
- p. 365. Item G should be written to avoid the term "waste stream" as it seems to imply wastewater when it also applies to stormwater.
- P. 365 Overall A-G list seems habitat heavy – there should be a reasonable balance. Adding first item above would help
- p.366 Note Policy Alignment – first column is same as last.
- p. 368 "True Source Control" – yeah! Seems to link well with lots of AA items in C.1.
- p. 371. Under Stormwater for Local Issues, add the non-structural. This is a mixed column of solutions (e.g., retrofits) and problems (e.g. disruption of natural hydrologic regime). Not sure what is intended. If problems should include categories of pollutants (conventional, toxics, organics, nutrients, etc..) and sources (industrial, transportation, commercial, residential, deposition, etc...). If solutions, should include "true source control", business inspections, E&O and other

Comments on Action Agenda for the Skagit Watershed

- The title "The Action Agenda in Skagit County / Watershed" is misleading and incorrect. The Skagit Watershed bounds three counties (Skagit, Snohomish, and Whatcom) and two countries (United States and Canada). The upper 300 square miles of the Skagit Watershed is located in British Columbia, which is definitely not part of Skagit County.
- The Action Agenda states that the content of the Skagit Action Agenda "section was obtained from two primary sources: (1) background material presented in the 2008 Action Agenda; (2) information developed in the process of collecting feedback on a template from those entities

that had time to engage in the process.” The latter process resulted in few responses because the response period was short (a couple of weeks), and because the template was so large and complex the most potential respondents did not have the time or the patience to fill it out.

- Several sources of information that were not used (but could have been) for the Action Agenda include the 2010 update of the Skagit Watershed Council’s three-year recovery program, the 2010 Strategic Plan Update, the 2005 Skagit Chinook Recovery Plan, the 2011 Middle Skagit Project Development completion report submitted to PSP and the SRF Board, and the Habitat Work Schedule web database that was developed and funded by the State of Washington. These documents are available from the Skagit Watershed Council’s web site, which was not listed in Action Agenda’s “references and additional resources” section for the Skagit. The Skagit Watershed Council’s web address is: <http://www.skagitwatershed.org/>
- We would recommend downloading the 2010 Strategic Plan Update first, since this provides an excellent summary written by NOAA and the Skagit Watershed Council on the priority areas and actions in the Skagit. The link for this document is:
http://www.skagitwatershed.org/uploads/council_docs/pdf/SWC_Strategic_Approach_2010.pdf
- The Skagit Chinook Recovery Plan can be downloaded from the Skagit River System Cooperative’s web site: <http://www.skagitcoop.org/>
- Numerous materials and types of input have been submitted to the Puget Sound Partnership (and formerly Shared Strategy) in response to information solicitations and at various workshops over the few past years, but these materials did not appear to have been used for the Action Agenda. This is a source of frustration by those who engage in PSP workshops, and take the time to respond to PSP information requests.
- The best way to get everyone together in the Skagit together for developing list of priorities and near term actions is to: 1) convene a one-day workshop at the Padilla Bay education center; 2) announce the workshop well ahead of time; 3) provide lunch to those who participate; and 4) provide everyone a copy of the workshop summary ASAP to confirm that the information was captured correctly.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment. If you have any questions on any of our comments, please contact me at susan.saffery@seattle.gov or 206 932-4900.

Sincerely,

Susan

Susan Crowley Saffery,
City of Seattle, Seattle Public Utilities